

THE POST:

Professional Online Supports for Teaching

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Dear Colleagues:

It is hard to believe that it is December already--this school year is well underway. My team and I thank you for the time and energy you devote to parent-teacher conferences and the ongoing reflection to plan and adjust instruction to meet the individual needs of your students. This very important effort has at its core a conversation about student progress which demonstrates your continued commitment to maintaining a positive home-school connection.

I also thank you for investing in your professional learning as members of professional learning communities within your schools. Your dedication to continuous improvement, shared leadership and goal attainment is key to the success and growth of all our students.

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season.

Dr. Laura C. Morana
Acting Chief Academic Officer
Division of Teaching and Learning

Division News

Acting Commissioner Kimberley Harrington and division team members have met with educators at recent school visits and statewide conferences. At the New Jersey School Boards Association Workshop in Atlantic City, Acting Commissioner Harrington advocated that students be first in all our discussions regarding education. She also announced the founding of the [Future Ready Schools-New Jersey](#) (FRS-NJ) certification program. The program, modeled after the national initiative, supports New Jersey schools in implementing personalized, research-based, digital learning strategies to prepare students.

Office of Career Readiness

The office is currently reapproving Career and Technical Education (CTE) applications for the Business Management and Administration Career Cluster using a new online application platform, Career and Technical Education Data Management System (CTE-DMS), found at the [NJ Homeroom](#) website. An advisory committee guides the work of the office team to determine the quality of such programs.

Office of School Innovation

The Office of School Innovation, now directed by Anthony Fitzpatrick, invites innovateNJ districts to attend [the December 16 Winter Convening](#) at New Jersey City University. The purpose is to share project results and discuss the next phase of innovateNJ.

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English Language Arts

Commonlit Website Expands Free Reading Resources

[Commonlit](#), a free online resource for literary and informational text, has been [awarded a \\$3.9 million USDE grant](#) to expand offerings to teachers, students and their families. The site provides reading passages appropriate for grades 5-12 and includes writing by several acclaimed authors. A recent pilot of Commonlit found that "students exposed to CommonLit became more engaged in reading, and teachers using CommonLit used best practices more often."

Students Invited to Write Letters about Literature

The [New Jersey Center for the Book](#) at Rutgers' School of Communication and Information invites students to participate in [Letters About Literature 2017](#), a reading and writing contest sponsored by the Library of Congress. Students are to read a book, poem or speech and write to the author, living or dead, about how the book impacted them. The deadline for grades 4-8 submissions is January 9, 2017, and more information is available at the [Library of Congress website](#).

Getting Students to Write Daily

The author of the article [Daily Writing Without the Dread](#), suggests there are "painless" ways to get students to write daily and for various purposes. Among her ideas are exit tickets in which students respond to a question about a lesson or letters written to other classmates about the day's lesson. Along with these strategies, the article also addresses other obstacles to writing instruction like providing purposeful feedback, chunking the writing process, and infusing meaningful grammar instruction.

Mathematics

NCES Kids Zone Website

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) hosts [Kids Zone](#), a website offering games and activities for students involving statistics and probability. The site provides opportunities to engage in mathematical practices, which include solving math problems and teasers, analyzing and comparing data and creating graphs.



NCTM and Math Forum Resources

The [Math Forum](#) website is a part of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). The site is a comprehensive online resource for students, teachers and families wishing to discuss, explore and engage in math-related games and activities. [Guidance](#) is provided for teachers and families exploring which activities, games and other site resources are appropriate for their grade 3 through 12 students.



Science

Translating K-5 Model Science Curriculum Framework into District Curriculum

This [December 19 workshop](#) will provide technical assistance on identifying opportunities for integrating science standards into ELA and mathematics instruction. In addition, discussion will focus on identifying appropriate Open Educational Resource (OER) materials, as well as creating science units accessible to all students.

NGSS December 2016 Newsletter

Read the [NGSS newsletter](#) to stay up to date on the implementation of science standards around the country. The newsletter offers ideas for teaching strategies and classroom resources.



Social Studies

Webinar on NJ History Resources

On December 14, the Department and the National Archives will partner to present a [one-hour webinar on Thinking Historically, Investigate Locally! Using NJ as a Lens](#). The program, designed for K-12 educators and media specialists, will focus on engaging students in “authentic inquiry-based learning activities using primary sources” related to New Jersey.

Steps to Better Document-Based Questions

The author of [Deepen Your Discussion of Document-Based Questions](#) suggests that document-based questions (DBQs) used in history and AP classes must encourage learners to dig deeper for evidence to support their decisions. She suggests strategies for creating better DBQ lessons which “bolster students' habits of inquiry and hone their skills for using evidence in a complex task.” Embedded in the piece is a six-minute video of a classroom teacher demonstrating the author’s ideas.

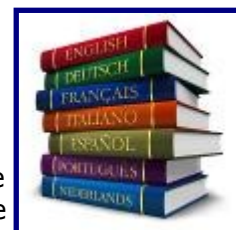
Bill of Rights Day

December 15 is [Bill of Rights Day](#). To learn more about the history of the documents and people who are responsible for our Bill of Rights, visit the [Constitution Center](#) website. They offer videos, and guidance for classroom discussions and debates, as well as primary sources.

World Language

Performance Indicators for Language Learners

The National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL-ACTFL) offers educators [“Can-Do” Statements](#). Language learners and their teachers can use the self-assessment checklists “to assess what they ‘can do’ with language in the Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational modes of communication,” which are part of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for World Languages (7.1).



New Jersey’s State Seal of Biliteracy for Students

In January 2016, New Jersey became the 15th state to offer students a legislated statewide [Seal of Biliteracy](#). To be eligible, students must demonstrate a high level of proficiency speaking, reading, writing, and understanding two or more languages. For more information, visit the [New Jersey State Seal of Biliteracy webpage](#).



Comprehensive Health and Physical Education

Kinesthetic Movement: Not Just for Physical Education

The author of [Move with Purpose: Four Approaches to Making Content Kinesthetic](#) is an educator who has written about adolescent behaviors and brain research. He describes four ways in which “teachers can capitalize on the brain's connection to physical movement to increase student engagement and academic achievement” in the classroom. These activities are intended to combine physical movement and learning across all content areas and grade levels.



Visual and Performing Arts

National Gallery of Art Kids Art Zone

[National Gallery of Art \(NGA\) Kids Art Zone](#) offers a variety of computer-based, art-making tools to encourage exploration and creativity for all students. Click on an image or banner to learn more about each program and how to utilize materials in the classroom. Also, visit [Adventures in Art](#) to find additional resources.

Poster Contest to Promote Vaccines

The New Jersey Department of Health is partnering with other organizations to promote understanding about vaccines for children with their fifth annual [Protect Me With 3+ campaign](#). Students are encouraged to submit their artwork or multimedia presentations to win prizes for themselves and their classrooms. Submissions are welcome from December 5 through 30. Find more information and guidelines on the [Protect Me With 3+ event flyer](#).

Educational Technology

Hour of Code During Computer Science Education Week

New Jersey districts are invited to participate in the upcoming global [Hour of Code](#) during Computer Science Education week, December 5-11. [Send the Office of School Innovation a short description](#) of your district, school or classroom plans for the 2016 Hour of Code, and your submission may be posted on the [Department's Facebook page](#).



NJ Summit on Future Ready Schools is January 11-12, 2017

Districts are urged to [register for the NJ Summit on Future Ready Schools, January 11-12, 2017](#), at New Jersey Institute of Technology's Newark campus. The event will allow district teams to focus on planning for student learning, with guidance from Future Ready facilitators.



21st Century Life and Careers

Structured Learning Experiences (SLE)

Structured Learning Experiences (SLE) allow students to explore career opportunities, develop skills through the Career Ready Practices and clarify personal, academic and career goals. The

Office of Career Readiness invites districts to [share successful SLE programs, experiences or stories](#). Selected submissions may be shared in a future issue of the POST.

Publishing Opportunities

Write for *ASCD Express*

[ASCD Express](#) is a free e-newsletter published online twice a month. Editors are currently seeking content for the February 2017 issue with the theme of Disciplinary Literacy. The desired focus is on better ways to develop students' reading, writing and thinking skills across the curriculum. Articles should be no longer than 1,000 words, and multimedia submissions should not exceed 10 minutes. [Send submissions](#) by December 15.



Assessment

PARCC Results Presented to Board of Education

The Department delivered [an overview of Spring 2016 PARCC results](#) to the State Board of Education on November 2. The information included charts showing increases, as well as persistent gaps among subgroups. Information was also provided on improvements planned for PARCC tools, data and resources to meet the needs of teachers and families.



Graduation Requirements for 2016-2017

This [broadcast memo on graduation requirements](#) alerts districts that graduation assessment requirements for students in the Class of 2017 have not changed since last year. There are various options for [satisfying high school graduation assessment requirements](#), updated in October 2016.

Creating Assessments Using Edulastic

[Edulastic](#) is an educational assessment platform which offers educators a means to create and assign their own digital quizzes, tests, assessments or worksheets. For more information on this free resource, visit [Edulastic's overview page](#).



Grants and Other Aid

Professional Learning Community (PLC) Aid for Districts

[Professional Learning Community \(PLC\) Aid](#) is categorical aid within the 2017 general fund to support the development of PLCs. Allowing \$10 per student per district, the money is to support PLCs in facilitating educator use of assessment data to improve classroom instruction. For [suggestions and examples](#) of ways PLC Aid funds can be used to support PLC work, see the [Department's Professional Development Resources webpage](#).

Nominate a LifeChanger

The [LifeChanger of the Year program](#) recognizes K-12 education professionals who "make a positive difference in the lives of students." Any stakeholder, including students, can nominate up to three educators in a school year for the annual award. Visit the [LifeChanger website](#) to find guidelines and forms which must be submitted by January 1, 2017.



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See you in January!